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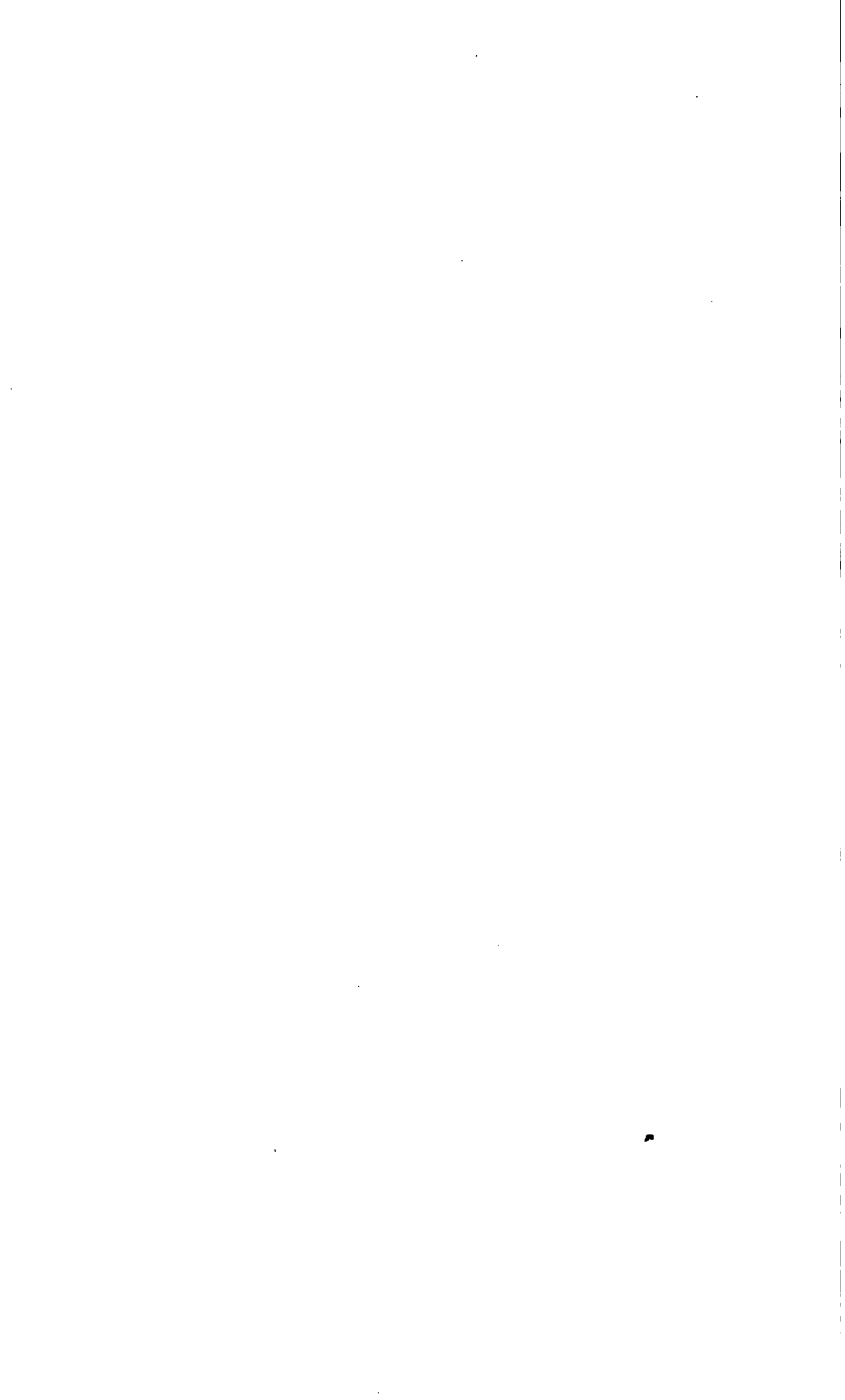
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REMARKS
ON THE
CHARACTER
OF
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,
OCCASIONED
BY THE PUBLICATION OF
SCOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON.
ASCRIBED TO DR. CHANNING.

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NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

THE Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, by Sir Walter Scott, has been anticipated with an eagerness proportioned to the unrivaled power of the author, and to the wonderful endowments and fortunes of the hero. That the general expectation has been satisfied, we cannot affirm. But few will deny, that the writer has given us a monument of his great talents. The rapidity with which such a work has been thrown off, astonishes us. We think, however, that the author owed to himself and to the public a more deliberate execution of this important undertaking. He should either have abandoned it, or have bestowed on it the long and patient labor which it required. The marks of negligence and haste which are spread through the work, are serious blemishes, perhaps inextinguishable defects. It wants compression and selection throughout. Many passages are encumbered with verbiage. Many thoughts are weakened by useless expansion and worse than useless repetition. Comparisons are accumulated to excess, and whilst many are exquisite, perhaps as many are trite and unworthy of history. The remarks are generally just, but obvious, and we fear we must add, often superficial. We state these defects plainly, that we may express the more freely our admiration of the talents, which have executed so rapidly, a work so extensive and various, so rich in information, so fresh and vivid in description, and furnishing such abundant specimens of a free, graceful, and vigorous style.

The work has the great merit of impartiality. It is probably inaccurate in many of its details, but singularly free from prejudice and passion. Not a few, who considered that the author was both a Briton and a friend of the principles and policy of Pitt, were ex-

pecting from his pen a discolored delineation of the implacable foe of England and of that great minister. But the rectitude of his mind, and his reverence for historical truth, have effectually preserved him from abusing the great power, conferred on him by his talents, over public opinion. We think that his laudable fear of wronging the enemy of his country, joined to an admiration of the dazzling qualities of Napoleon, has led him to soften unduly the crimes of his hero, and to give more favorable impressions than truth will warrant.

But enough of the author, who needs not our praise, and can suffer little by our censure. Our concern is with his subject. A just estimate of the late emperor of France, seems to us important. That extraordinary man, having operated on the world with unprecedented power, during his life, is now influencing it by his character. That character, we apprehend, is not viewed as it should be. The kind of admiration which it inspires, even in free countries, is a bad omen. The greatest crime against society, that of spoiling it of its rights and loading it with chains, still fails to move that deep abhorrence, which is its due; and which, if really felt, would fix on the usurper a brand of indelible infamy. Regarding freedom as the chief interest of human nature, as essential to its intellectual, moral, and religious progress, we look on men, who have signalized themselves by their hostility to it, with an indignation at once stern and sorrowful, which no glare of successful war, and no admiration of the crowd, can induce us to suppress. We mean then to speak freely of Napoleon. But if we know ourselves, we could on no account utter one unjust reproach. We speak the more freely, because conscious of exemption from every feeling like animosity. We war not with the dead. We would resist only what we deem the pernicious influence of the dead. We would devote ourselves to the cause of freedom and humanity, a cause perpetually betrayed by the admiration lavished on prosperous crime and all-grasping ambition. Our great topic will be the Character of Napoleon; and with this we shall naturally intersperse reflections on the great interests which he perpetually influenced.

We begin with observing, that it is an act of justice to Bonaparte to remember, that he grew up under disastrous influences, in

a troubled day, when men's minds were convulsed, old institutions overthrown, old opinions shaken, old restraints snapped asunder ; when the authority of religion was spurned, and youth abandoned to unwonted license ; when the imagination was made feverish by visions of indistinct good, and the passions swelled by the sympathy of millions to a resistless torrent. A more dangerous school for the character cannot well be conceived. That All-seeing Being, who knows the trials of his creatures and the secrets of the heart, can alone judge to what degree crimes are extenuated by circumstances so inauspicious. This we must remember in reviewing the history of men, who were exposed to trials unknown to ourselves. But because the turpitude of an evil agent is diminished by infelicities of education or condition, we must not therefore confound the immutable distinctions of right and wrong, and withhold our reprobation from atrocities which have spread misery and slavery far and wide.

It is also due to Napoleon to observe, that there has always existed, and still exists, a mournful obtuseness of moral feeling in regard to the crimes of military and political life. The wrongdoing of public men on a large scale, has never drawn upon them that sincere, hearty abhorrence which visits private vice. Nations have seemed to court aggression and bondage, by their stupid, insane admiration of successful tyrants. The wrongs from which men have suffered most, in body and mind, are yet unpunished. True, Christianity has put into our lips censures on the aspiring and the usurping. But these reproaches are as yet little more than sounds, and unmeaning commonplaces. They are repeated for form's sake. When we read or hear them, we feel that they want depth and strength. They are not inward, solemn, burning convictions, breaking from the indignant soul with a tone of reality, before which guilt would cower. The true moral feeling in regard to the crimes of public men, is almost to be created. We believe, then, that such a character as Bonaparte's, is formed with very little consciousness of its turpitude ; and society, which contributes so much to its growth, is responsible for its existence, and merits in part the misery which it spreads.

Of the early influences under which Bonaparte was formed, we know little. He was educated in a military school; and this, we apprehend, is not an institution to form much delicacy, or independence of moral feeling: for the young soldier is taught, as his first duty, to obey his superior without consulting his conscience; to take human life at another's bidding; to perform that deed, which above all others requires deliberate conviction, without a moment's inquiry as to its justice, and to place himself a passive instrument in hands, which, as all history teaches, often reek with blood causelessly shed.

His first political association was with the Jacobins, the most sanguinary of all the factions which raged in France, and whose sway is emphatically called 'the reign of terror.' The service which secured his command in Italy, was the turning of his artillery on the people, who, however dangerous when acting as a mob, happened in the present case to understand their rights, and were directing their violence against manifest usurpation.

His first campaign was in Italy; and we have still a vivid recollection of the almost rapturous admiration with which we followed his first triumphs; for then we were simple enough to regard him as the chosen guardian of liberty. His peculiar tactics were not then understood; the secret of his success had not reached us; and his rapid victories stimulated the imagination to invest him with the mysterious powers of a hero of romance. We confess that we cannot now read the history of his Italian wars without a quickened movement in the veins. The rapidity of his conceptions; the inexhaustibleness of his invention; the energy of his will; the decision which suffered not a moment's pause between the purpose and its execution; the presence of mind, which, amidst sudden reverses and on the brink of ruin, devised the means of safety and success,—these commanding attributes, added to a courage, which, however suspected afterwards, never faltered then, compel us to bestow, what indeed we have no desire to withhold, the admiration which is due to superior power.

Let not the friends of peace be offended. We have said, and we repeat it, that we have no desire to withhold our admiration from the energies which war often awakens. Great powers, even in their perversion, attest a glorious nature, and we may feel their

grandeur, whilst we condemn, with our whole strength of moral feeling, the evil passions by which they are depraved. We are willing to grant that war, abhor it as we may, often develops and places in strong light, a force of intellect and purpose, which raises our conceptions of the human soul. There is perhaps no moment in life, in which the mind is brought into such intense action, in which the will is so strenuous, and in which irrepressible excitement is so tempered with selfpossession, as in the hour of battle. Still the greatness of the warrior is poor and low compared with the magnanimity of virtue. It vanishes before the greatness of principle. The martyr to humanity, to freedom, or religion; the unshrinking adherent of despised and deserted truth; who, alone, unsupported, and scorned, with no crowd to infuse into him courage, no variety of objects to draw his thoughts from himself, no opportunity of effort or resistance to rouse and nourish energy, still yields himself calmly, resolutely, with invincible philanthropy, to bear prolonged and exquisite suffering, which one retracting word might remove, — such a man is as superior to the warrior, as the tranquil and boundless heavens above us, to the low earth we tread beneath our feet.

We have spoken of the energies of mind called forth by war. If we may be allowed a short digression, which however bears directly on our main subject, the merits of Napoleon, we would observe, that military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius; for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. We grant that a mind, which takes in a wide country at a glance, and understands almost by intuition the positions it affords for a successful campaign, is a comprehensive and vigorous one. The general, who disposes his forces so as to counteract a greater force; who supplies by skill, science, and genius, the want of numbers; who dives into the counsels of his enemy, and who gives unity, energy, and success to a vast sphere of operations, in the midst of casualties and obstructions which no wisdom could foresee, manifests great power. But still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force; to remove physical obstructions; to avail himself of physical aids and advantages; to act on matter; to overcome rivers, ramparts,

mountains, and human muscles ; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order ; and accordingly nothing is more common than to find men, eminent in this department, who are almost wholly wanting in the noblest energies of the soul ; in imagination and taste, in the capacity of enjoying works of genius, in large views of human nature, in the moral sciences, in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society, and in original conceptions on the great subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings. The office of a great general does not differ widely from that of a great mechanician, whose business it is to frame new combinations of physical forces, to adapt them to new circumstances, and to remove new obstructions. Accordingly great generals, away from the camp, are commonly no greater men than the mechanician taken from his workshop. In conversation they are often dull. Works of profound thinking on general and great topics they cannot comprehend. The conqueror of Napoleon, the hero of Waterloo, undoubtedly possesses great military talents ; but we have never heard of his eloquence in the senate, or of his sagacity in the cabinet ; and we venture to say, that he will leave the world, without adding one new thought on the great themes, on which the genius of philosophy and legislature has meditated for ages. We will not go down for illustration to such men as Nelson, a man great on the deck, but debased by gross vices, and who never pretended to enlargement of intellect. To institute a comparison in point of talent and genius between such men and Milton, Bacon, and Shakspeare, is almost an insult on these illustrious names. Who can think of these truly great intelligences ; of the range of their minds through heaven and earth ; of their deep intuition into the soul ; of their new and glowing combinations of thought ; of the energy with which they grasped and subjected to their main purpose, the infinite materials of illustration which nature and life afford ; who can think of the forms of transcendent beauty and grandeur which they created, or which were rather emanations of their own minds ; of the calm wisdom and fervid impetuous imagination which they conjoined ; of the dominion which they have exerted over so many generations, and which time only extends and makes sure ; of the voice

of power, in which, though dead, they still speak to nations, and awaken intellect, sensibility, and genius in both hemispheres; who can think of such men, and not feel the immense inferiority of the most gifted warrior, whose elements of thought are physical forces and physical obstructions, and whose employment is the combination of the lowest class of objects, on which a powerful mind can be employed?

We return to Napoleon. His splendid victories in Italy spread his name like lightning through the civilized world. Unhappily they emboldened him to those unprincipled and open aggressions, to the indulgence of that lawless, imperious spirit, which marked his future course, and kept pace with his growing power. In his victorious career, he soon came in contact with States, some of which, as Tuscany and Venice, had acknowledged the French Republic, whilst others, as Parma and Modena, had observed a strict neutrality. The old-fashioned laws of nations, under which such states would have found shelter, seemed never to have crossed the mind of the young victor. Not satisfied with violating the neutrality of all, he seized the port of Leghorn, and ruined the once flourishing commerce of Tuscany; and having exacted heavy tribute from Parma and Modena, he compelled these powers to surrender, what had hitherto been held sacred in the utmost extremities of war, some of their choicest pictures, the chief ornaments of their capitals. We are sometimes told of the good done by Napoleon to Italy. But we have heard his name pronounced as indignantly there as here. An Italian cannot forgive him for robbing that country of its noblest works of art, its dearest treasures and glories, which had made it a land of pilgrimage to men of taste and genius from the whole civilized world, and which had upheld and solaced its pride under conquest and humiliation. From this use of power in the very dawn of his fortunes, it might easily have been foretold, what part he would act in the stormy day which was approaching, when the sceptre of France and Europe was to be offered to any strong hand, which should be daring enough to grasp it.

Next to Italy, Egypt became the stage for the display of Napoleon; Egypt, a province of the Grand Signior, with whom France was in profound peace, and who, according to the long

established relations of Europe, was her natural ally. It would seem, that this expedition was Bonaparte's own project. His motives are not very distinctly stated by his biographer. We doubt not that his great aim was conspicuousness. He chose a theatre where all eyes could be turned upon him. He saw that the time for usurpation had not yet come in France. To use his own language, 'the fruit was not yet ripe.' He wanted a field of action which would draw upon him the gaze of the world, and from which he might return at the favorable moment for the prosecution of his enterprises at home. At the same time he undoubtedly admitted into his mind, which success had already intoxicated, some vague wild hope of making an impression on the Eastern world, which might place its destinies at his command, and give him a throne more enviable than Europe could bestow. His course in the East exhibited the same lawlessness, the same contempt of all restraints on his power, which we have already noted. No means, which promised success, were thought the worse for their guilt. It was not enough for him to boast of his triumphs over the cross, or to profess Mahometanism. He claimed inspiration, and a commission from God, and was anxious to join the character of prophet to that of hero. This was the beginning of the great weaknesses and errors into which he was betrayed by that spirit of selfexaggeration, which, under the influence of past success and of unbounded flattery, was already growing into a kind of insanity. In his own view, he was fit to be a compeer with Mahomet. His greatness in his own eyes made him blind to the folly of urging his supernatural claims on the Turk, who contemned, even more than he abhorred, a Frank; and who would sooner have sold himself a slave to Christians, than have acknowledged a renegade Christian as a sharer of the glories of Mahomet. It was not enough for Bonaparte, on this expedition, to insult God, to show an impiety as foolish as it was daring. He proceeded to trample on the sentiments and dictates of humanity with equal hardihood. The massacre of Jaffa is universally known. Twelve hundred prisoners, and probably more, who had surrendered themselves to Napoleon, and were apparently admitted to quarter, were two days afterwards marched out of the fort, divided into small bodies, and then deliberately shot, and, in case

the musket was not effectual, were despatched by bayonets. This was an outrage which cannot be sheltered by the laws and usages of war, barbarous as they are. It was the deed of a bandit and savage, and ought to be execrated by good men, who value and would preserve the mitigations which Christianity has infused into the conduct of national hostilities.

The next great event in Bonaparte's history was the usurpation of the supreme power of the state, and the establishment of military despotism over France. On the particulars of this criminal act we have no desire to enlarge, nor are we anxious to ascertain, whether our hero, on this occasion, lost his courage and self-possession, as he is reported to have done. We are more anxious to express our convictions of the turpitude of this outrage on liberty and justice. For this crime but one apology can be offered. Napoleon, it is said, seized the reins, when, had he let them slip, they would have fallen into other hands. He enslaved France at a moment, when, had he spared her, she would have found another tyrant. Admitting the truth of the plea, what is it but the reasoning of the highwayman, who robs and murders the traveler, because the booty was about to be seized by another hand, or because another dagger was ready to do the bloody deed? We are aware that the indignation with which we regard this crime of Napoleon, will find a response in few breasts; for to the multitude, a throne is a temptation which no virtue can be expected to withstand. But moral truth is immovable amidst the sophistry, ridicule, and abject reasonings of men, and the time will come, when it will find a meet voice to give it utterance. Of all crimes against society, usurpation is the blackest. He who lifts a parricidal hand against his country's rights and freedom; who plants his foot on the necks of thirty millions of his fellow creatures; who concentrates in his single hand the powers of a mighty empire, and who wields its powers, squanders its treasures, and pours forth its blood like water, to make other nations slaves and the world his prey, — this man, as he unites all crimes in his sanguinary career, so he should be set apart by the human race for their unmingled and unmeasured abhorrence, and should bear on his guilty head a mark as opprobrious as that which the first murderer wore. We cannot think with patience of one man fastening chains on a whole

people, and subjecting millions to his single will ; of whole regions overshadowed by the tyranny of a frail being like ourselves. In anguish of spirit we exclaim, How long will an abject world kiss the foot which tramples it ? How long shall crime find shelter in its very aggravations and excess ?

Perhaps it may be said, that our indignation seems to light on Napoleon, not so much because he was a despot, as because he became a despot by usurpation ; that we seem not to hate tyranny itself, so much as a particular mode of gaining it. We do indeed regard usurpation as a crime of peculiar blackness, especially when committed, as in the case of Napoleon, in the name of liberty. All despotism, however, whether usurped or hereditary, is our abhorrence. We regard it as the most grievous wrong and insult to the human race. But towards the hereditary despot we have more of compassion than indignation. Nursed and brought up in delusion, worshiped from his cradle, never spoken to in the tone of fearless truth, taught to look on the great mass of his fellow beings as an inferior race, and to regard despotism as a law of nature and a necessary element of social life, — such a prince, whose education and condition almost deny him the possibility of acquiring healthy moral feeling and manly virtue, must not be judged severely. Still, in absolving the despot from much of the guilt which seems at first to attach to his unlawful and abused power, we do not the less account despotism a wrong and a curse. The time for its fall, we trust, is coming. It cannot fall too soon. It has long enough wrung from the laborer his hard earnings ; long enough squandered a nation's wealth on its parasites and minions ; long enough warred against the freedom of the mind, and arrested the progress of truth. It has filled dungeons enough with the brave and good, and shed enough of the blood of patriots. Let its end come. It cannot come too soon.

We have now followed Bonaparte to the moment of possessing himself of the supreme power. Those who were associated with him in subverting the government of the Directory, essayed to lay restraints on the First Consul, who was to take their place. But he indignantly repelled them. He held the sword, and with this, not only intimidated the selfish, but awed and silenced the patri-

otic, who saw too plainly, that it could only be wrested from him by renewing the horrors of the revolution. — We now proceed to consider some of the means by which he consolidated his power, and raised it into the imperial dignity. We consider these as much more important illustrations of his character than his successive campaigns, to which accordingly we shall give little attention.

One of his first measures for giving stability to his power, was certainly a wise one, and was obviously dictated by his situation and character. Having seized the first dignity in the state by military force, and leaning on a devoted soldiery, he was under no necessity of binding himself to any of the parties which had distracted the country, a vassalage to which his domineering spirit could ill have stooped. Policy and his love of mastery pointed out to him an indiscriminate employment of the leading men of all parties; and not a few of these had become so selfish and desperate in the disastrous progress of the revolution, that they were ready to break up old connexions, and to divide the spoils of the Republic with a master. Accordingly he adopted a system of comprehension and lenity, from which even the emigrants were not excluded, and had the satisfaction of seeing almost the whole talent which the revolution had quickened, leagued in the execution of his plans. Under the able men whom he called to his aid, the finances and the war department, which had fallen into a confusion that threatened ruin to the state, were soon restored to order, and means and forces provided for retrieving the recent defeats and disgraces of the French armies.

This leads us to mention another and most important and effectual means by which Napoleon secured and enlarged his power. We refer to the brilliant campaign immediately following his elevation to the Consulate, and which restored to France the ascendancy which she had lost during his absence. On his success at this juncture his future fortunes wholly depended. It was in this campaign that he proved himself the worthy rival of Hannibal. The energy which conducted an army with its cavalry, artillery, and supplies, across the Alps, by untried paths, which only the chamois hunter, born and bred amidst glaciers and everlasting snows, had trodden, gave the impression, which of all

others he most desired to spread, of his superiority to nature, as well as to human opposition. This enterprise was in one view a fearful omen to Europe. It showed a power over the minds of his soldiers, the effects of which were not to be calculated. The conquest of St. Bernard by a French army was the boast of the nation; but a still more wonderful thing was, the capacity of the general to inspire into that army the intense force, confidence, resolution, and patience, by which alone the work could be accomplished. The victory of Marengo, gained by one of the accidents of war in the moment of apparent defeat and ruin, secured to Bonaparte the dominion which he coveted. France, who, in her madness and folly, had placed her happiness in conquest, now felt that the glory of her arms was safe only in the hands of the First Consul; whilst the soldiery, who held the sceptre in their gift, became more thoroughly satisfied, that triumph and spoils waited on his standard.

Another important and essential means of securing and building up his power, was the system of *espionage*, called the Police, which, under the Directory, had received a development worthy of those friends of freedom, but which was destined to be perfected by the wisdom of Napoleon. It would seem as if despotism, profiting by the experience of ages, had put forth her whole skill and resources in forming the French police, and had forged a weapon, never to be surpassed, for stifling the faintest breathings of disaffection, and chaining every free thought. This system of *espionage*, (we are proud that we have no English word for the infernal machine,) had indeed been used under all tyrannies. But it wanted the craft of Fouché, and the energy of Bonaparte, to disclose all its powers. In the language of our author, 'it spread through all the ramifications of society;' that is, every man, of the least importance in the community, had the eye of a spy upon him. He was watched at home as well as abroad, in the boudoir and theatre, in the brothel and gaming house; and these last named haunts furnished not a few ministers of the Argus-eyed police. There was an ear open through all France to catch the whispers of discontent; a power of evil, which aimed to rival, in omnipresence and invisibleness, the benignant agency of the Deity. Of all instruments of tyranny, this is the most detestable;

for it chills the freedom and warmth of social intercourse ; locks up the heart ; infects and darkens men's minds with mutual jealousies and fears ; and reduces to system a wary dissimulation, subversive of force and manliness of character. We find, however, some consolation in learning that tyrants are the prey of distrust, as well as the people over whom they set this cruel guard ; that tyrants cannot confide in their own spies, but must keep watch over the machinery which we have described, lest it recoil upon themselves. Bonaparte at the head of an army, is a dazzling spectacle ; but Bonaparte, heading a horde of spies, compelled to doubt and fear these base instruments of his power, compelled to divide them into bands, and to receive daily reports from each, so that by balancing them against each other and sifting their testimony, he might gather the truth, — Bonaparte, thus employed, is any thing but imposing. It requires no great elevation of thought to look down on such an occupation with scorn ; and we see, in the anxiety and degradation which it involves, the beginning of that retribution which tyranny cannot escape.

Another means by which the First Consul protected his power can excite no wonder. That he should fetter the press, should banish or imprison refractory editors, should subject the journals and more important works of literature to jealous superintendence, these were things of course. Free writing and despotism are such implacable foes, that we hardly think of blaming a tyrant for keeping no terms with the press. He cannot do it. He might as reasonably choose a volcano for the foundation of his throne. Necessity is laid upon him, unless he is in love with ruin, to check the bold and honest expression of thought. But the necessity is his own choice ; and let infamy be that man's portion, who seizes a power which he cannot sustain, but by dooming the mind, through a vast empire, to slavery, and by turning the press, that great organ of truth, into an instrument of public delusion and debasement.

We pass to another means of removing obstructions to his power and ambition, still worse than the last. We refer to the terror which he spread by his severities, just before assuming the imperial power. The murder of the Duke d'Enghien was justified by Napoleon as a method of striking fear into the Bourbons, who,

as he said, were plotting his death. This may have been one motive ; for we have reason to think that he was about that time threatened with assassination. But we believe still more, that he intended to awe into acquiescence the opposition, which he knew would be awakened in many breasts, by the prostration of the forms of the republic, and the open assumption of the imperial dignity. There were times when Bonaparte disclaimed the origination of the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. But no other could have originated it. It bears internal marks of its author. The boldness, decision, and overpowering rapidity of the crime, point unerringly to the soul where it was conceived. We believe that one great recommendation of this murder, was, that it would strike amazement and terror into France and Europe, and show that he was prepared to shed any blood, and to sweep before him every obstruction, in his way to absolute power. Certain it is, that the open murder of the Duke d'Enghien, and the justly suspected assassinations of Pichegru and Wright, did create a dread, such as had not been felt before ; and whilst on previous occasions some faint breathings of liberty were to be heard in the legislative bodies, only one voice, that of Carnot, was raised against investing Bonaparte with the imperial crown, and laying France, an unprotected victim, at his feet.

There remain for our consideration other means employed by Bonaparte for building up and establishing his power, of a different character from those we have named, and which on this account we cannot pass without notice. One of these was the Concordat which he extorted from the Pope, and which professed to re-establish the Catholic religion in France. Our religious prejudices have no influence on our judgment of this measure. We make no objections to it, as the restoration of a worship which on many accounts we condemn. We view it now simply as an instrument of policy, and in this light, it seems to us no proof of the sagacity of Bonaparte. It helps to confirm in us an impression, which other parts of his history give us, that he did not understand the peculiar character of his age, and the peculiar and original policy which it demanded. He always used commonplace means of power, although the unprecedented times in which he lived, required a system which should combine untried resources, and

touch new springs of action. Because old governments had found a convenient prop in religion, Napoleon imagined that it was a necessary appendage and support of his sway, and resolved to restore it. But at this moment there were no foundations in France for a religious establishment, which could give strength and a character of sacredness to the supreme power. There was comparatively no faith, no devout feeling, and still more, no superstition to supply the place of these. The time for the reaction of the religious principle had not yet arrived; and a more likely means of retarding it could hardly have been devised, than the nursing care extended to the church by Bonaparte, the recent Mussulman, the known despiser of the ancient faith, who had no worship at heart but the worship of himself. Instead of bringing religion to the aid of the state, it was impossible that such a man should touch it, without loosening the faint hold which it yet retained on the people. There were none so ignorant as to be the dupes of the First Consul in this particular. Every man, woman, and child knew that he was playing the part of a juggler. Not one religious association could be formed with his character or government. It was a striking proof of the self-exaggerating vanity of Bonaparte, and of his ignorance of the higher principles of human nature, that he not only hoped to revive and turn to his account the old religion, but imagined that he could, if necessary, have created a new one. 'Had the Pope never existed before, he should have been made for the occasion,' was the speech of this political charlatan; as if religious opinion and feeling were things to be manufactured by a consular decree. Ancient legislators, by adopting and sympathizing with popular and rooted superstitions, were able to press them into the service of their institutions. They were wise enough to build on a pre-existing faith, and studiously to conform to it. Bonaparte, in a country of infidelity and atheism, and whilst unable to refrain from sarcasms on the system which he patronized, was weak enough to believe that he might make it a substantial support of his government. He undoubtedly congratulated himself on the terms which he exacted from the Pope, and which had never been conceded to the most powerful monarchs; forgetting that his apparent success was the defeat of his plans; for just as far as he severed the

church from the supreme pontiff, and placed himself conspicuously at its head, he destroyed the only connexion which could give it influence. Just so far its power over opinion and conscience ceased. It became a coarse instrument of state, condemned by the people, and serving only to demonstrate the aspiring views of its master. Accordingly the French bishops in general refused to hold their dignities under this new head, preferred exile to the sacrifice of the rights of the church, and left behind them a hearty abhorrence of the Concordat among the more zealous members of their communion. Happy would it have been for Napoleon, had he left the Pope and the church to themselves. By occasionally recognising and employing, and then insulting and degrading the Roman pontiff, he exasperated a large part of Christendom, fastened on himself the brand of impiety, and awakened a religious hatred which contributed its full measure to his fall.

As another means employed by Bonaparte for giving strength and honor to his government, we may name the grandeur of his public works, which he began in his consulate and continued after his accession to the imperial dignity. These dazzled France, and still impress travelers with admiration. Could we separate these from his history, and did no other indication of his character survive, we should undoubtedly honor him with the title of a beneficent sovereign; but connected as they are, they do little or nothing to change our conceptions of him as an all-grasping, unprincipled usurper. Paris was the chief object of these labors; and surely we cannot wonder, that he who aimed at universal dominion, should strive to improve and adorn the metropolis of his empire. It is the practice of despots to be lavish of expense on the royal residence and the seat of government. Travellers in France, as in other countries of the continent, are struck and pained by the contrast between the magnificent capital and the mud-walled village, and uninteresting province. Bonaparte had a special motive for decorating Paris, for 'Paris is France,' as has often been observed; and in conciliating the vanity of the great city, he secured the obedience of the whole country. The boasted internal improvements of Napoleon scarcely deserve to be named, if we compare their influence with the operation of his public measures.

The conscription, which drew from agriculture its most effective laborers, and his continental system, which sealed up every port and annihilated the commerce of his empire, drained and exhausted France to a degree, for which his artificial stimulants of industry, and his splendid projects afforded no compensation. Perhaps the most admired of all his public works, is the road over the Simplon, to which all travelers concur in giving the epithet, stupendous. But it ought not to amaze us, that he, who was aspiring at unlimited dominion, should establish communications between the different provinces of his empire. It ought not to amaze us, that he, who had scaled the glaciers of St. Bernard, should covet some easier passage for pouring his troops into Italy; nor is it very wonderful, that a sovereign, who commanded the revenues of Europe, and who lived in an age when civil engineering had been advanced to a perfection before unknown, should accomplish a bolder enterprise than his predecessors. We would add, that Napoleon must divide with Fabbioni the glory of the road over the Simplon; for the genius which contrived and constructed, is more properly its author, than the will which commanded it.

There is however one great work, which gives Bonaparte a fair claim on the gratitude of posterity, and entitles him to an honorable renown. We refer to the new code of laws, which was given to France under his auspices. His participation in this work has indeed been unwarrantably and ridiculously magnified. Because he attended the meetings of the commissioners to whom it was assigned, and made some useful and sagacious suggestions, he has been praised, as if he had struck out, by the miraculous force of his genius, a new code of laws. The truth is, that he employed for this work, as he should have done, the most eminent civilians of the empire; and it is also true that these learned men have little claim to originality; for, as our author observes, the code 'has few peculiarities making a difference betwixt its principles and those of the Roman law.' In other words, they preferred wisdom to novelty. Still Bonaparte deserves great praise for his interest in the work, for the impulse he gave to those to whom it was committed, and for the time and thought, which, amidst the cares of a vast empire, he bestowed upon it. That his ambition incited him to this labor, we doubt not. He meant to entwine

the laurels of Justinian with those of Alexander. But we will not quarrel with ambition, when it is wise enough to devote itself to the happiness of mankind. In the present case, he showed that he understood something of true glory ; and we prize the instance more, because it stands almost alone in his history. We look on the conqueror, the usurper, the spoiler of kingdoms, the insatiable despot, with disgust, and see in all these characters an essential vulgarness of mind. But when we regard him as a Fountain of Justice to a vast empire, we recognise in him a resemblance to the just and benignant Deity, and cheerfully accord to him the praise of bestowing on a nation one of the greatest gifts, and of the most important means of improvement and happiness, which it is permitted to man to confer. It was however the misery of Bonaparte, a curse brought on him by his crimes, that he could touch nothing without leaving on it the polluting mark of despotism. His usurpation took from him the power of legislating with magnanimity, where his own interest was concerned. He could provide for the administration of justice between man and man, but not between the citizen and the ruler. Political offences, the very class which ought to be submitted to a jury, were denied that mode of trial. Juries might decide on other criminal questions ; but they were not to be permitted to interpose between the despot and the ill fated subjects, who might fall under his suspicion. These were arraigned before 'special tribunals, invested with a half military character,' the ready ministers of nefarious prosecutions, and only intended to cloak by legal forms the murderous purpose of the tyrant.

We have thus considered some of the means by which Bonaparte consolidated and extended his power. We now see him advanced to that imperial throne, on which he had long fixed his eager eye. We see France now awed and now dazzled by the influence we have described, and at last surrendering, by public, deliberate acts, without a struggle or a show of opposition, her rights, liberties, interests, and power, to an absolute master and to his posterity for ever. Thus perished the name and forms of the Republic. Thus perished the hopes of philanthropy. The air, which a few years ago resounded with the shouts of a great people

casting away their chains, and claiming their birthright of freedom, now rung with the servile cries of long life to a bloodstained usurper. There were indeed generous spirits, true patriots, like our own La Fayette, still left in France. But few and scattered, they were left to shed in secret the tears of sorrowful and indignant despair. By this base and disastrous issue of their revolution, the French nation not only renounced their own rights, but brought reproach on the cause of freedom, which years cannot wash away. This is to us a more painful recollection, than all the desolations which France spread through Europe, and than her own bitter sufferings, when the hour of retribution came upon her. The fields which she laid waste are again waving with harvest; and the groans which broke forth through her cities and villages, when her bravest sons perished by thousands and ten thousands on the snows of Russia, have died away, and her wasted population is renewed. But the wounds which she inflicted on freedom by the crimes perpetrated in that sacred name, and by the abject spirit with which that sacred cause was deserted, are still fresh and bleeding. France not only subjected herself to a tyrant, but what is worse, she has given tyranny every where new pleas and arguments, and emboldened it to preach openly, in the face of heaven, the impious doctrines of absolute power and unconditional submission.

Napoleon was now Emperor of France; and a man unacquainted with human nature, would think that such an empire, whose bounds now extended to the Rhine, might have satisfied even an ambitious man. But Bonaparte obeyed that law of progress, to which the highest minds are peculiarly subjected; and acquisition inflamed, instead of appeasing, the spirit of dominion. He had long proposed to himself the conquest of Europe, of the world; and the title of Emperor added intenseness to this purpose. Did we not fear, that by repetition we might impair the conviction which we are most anxious to impress, we would enlarge on the enormity of the guilt involved in the project of universal empire. Napoleon knew distinctly the price which he must pay for the eminence which he coveted. He knew that the path to it lay over wounded and slaughtered millions, over putrefying heaps of his fellow creatures, over ravaged fields, smoking

ruins, pillaged cities. He knew that his steps would be followed by the groans of widowed mothers and famished orphans; of bereaved friendship and despairing love; and that in addition to this amount of misery, he would create an equal amount of crime, by multiplying indefinitely the instruments and participators of his rapine and fraud. He knew the price and resolved to pay it. But we do not insist on a topic, which few, very few as yet understand or feel. Turning then for the present from the moral aspect of this enterprise, we will view it in another light, which is of great importance to a just estimate of his claims on admiration. We will inquire into the nature and fitness of the measures and policy which he adopted, for compassing the subjugation of Europe and the world.

We are aware that this discussion may expose us to the charge of great presumption. It may be said that men, having no access to the secrets of cabinets, and no participation in public affairs, are not the best judges of the policy of such a man as Napoleon. This we are not anxious to disprove, nor shall we quarrel with our readers for questioning the soundness of our opinions. But we will say, that though distant, we have not been indifferent observers of the great events of our age, and that though conscious of exposure to many errors, we have a strong persuasion of the substantial correctness of our views. We express them, without reserve, our belief, that the policy of Napoleon was wanting in sagacity, and that he proved himself incapable, as we before suggested, of understanding the character and answering the demands of his age. His system was a repetition of old means, when the state of the world was new. The sword and the police, which had sufficed him for enslaving France, were not the only powers required for his designs against the human race. Other resources were to be discovered or created; and the genius for calling them forth did not, we conceive, belong to Napoleon.

The circumstances under which Napoleon aspired to universal empire, differed in many respects from those under which former conquerors were placed. It was easy for Rome, when she had subdued kingdoms, to reduce them to provinces and to govern them by force; for nations at that period were bound together by no tie. They had little communication with each other. Differ-

ences of origin, of religion, of manners, of language, of modes of warfare ; differences aggravated by long and ferocious wars, and by the general want of civilization, prevented joint action, and almost all concern for one another's fate. Modern Europe, on the other hand, was an assemblage of civilized states, closely connected by commerce, by literature, by a common faith, by interchange of thoughts and improvements, and by a policy which had for ages proposed, as its chief object, the establishment of such a balance of power as would secure national independence. Under these influences the human mind had made great progress ; and in truth the French revolution had resulted from an unprecedented excitement and development of men's faculties, and from the extension of power and intelligence through a vastly wider class than had participated in them at any former period. The very power which Napoleon was wielding, might be traced to an enthusiasm essentially generous, and manifesting a tendency of the civilized world to better institutions. It is plain that the old plans of conquest, and the maxims of comparatively barbarous ages, did not suit such a state of society. An ambitious man was to make his way, by allying himself with the new movements and excitements of the world. The existence of a vast maritime power like England, which, by its command of the ocean and its extensive commerce, was brought into contact with every community, and which at the same time enjoyed the enviable pre-eminence of possessing the freest institutions in Europe, was of itself a sufficient motive for a great modification of the policy, by which one state was now to be placed at the head of the nations. The peculiar character and influence of England, Bonaparte seemed indeed never able to comprehend ; and the violent measures, by which he essayed to tear asunder the old connexions of that country with the continent, only gave them strength, by adding to the ties of interest those of sympathy, of common suffering, and common danger.

Force and corruption were the great engines of Napoleon, and he plied them without disguise or reserve, not caring how far he insulted, and armed against himself, the moral and national feelings of Europe. His great reliance was on the military spirit and energy of the French people. To make France a nation of soldiers was the first and main instrument of his policy ; and here he

was successful. The revolution indeed had in no small degree done this work to his hands. To complete it, he introduced a national system of education, having for its plain end to train the whole youth of France to a military life, to familiarize the mind to this destination from its earliest years, and to associate the idea of glory almost exclusively with arms. The conscription gave full efficacy to this system; for as every young man in the empire had reason to anticipate a summons to the army, the first object in education naturally was, to fit him for the field. The public honors bestowed on military talent, and a rigorous impartiality in awarding promotion to merit, so that no origin, however obscure, was a bar to what were deemed the highest honors of Europe, kindled the ambition of the whole people into a flame, and directed it exclusively to the camp. It is true, the conscription, which thinned so terribly the ranks of her youth, and spread anxiety and bereavement through all her dwellings, was severely felt in France. But Napoleon knew the race whom it was his business to manage; and by the glare of victory, and the title of the Grand Empire, he succeeded in reconciling them for a time to the most painful domestic privations, and to an unexampled waste of life. Thus he secured, what he accounted the most important instrument of dominion, a great military force. But, on the other hand, the stimulants which, for this purpose, he was forced to apply perpetually to French vanity, the ostentation with which the invincible power of France was trumpeted to the world, and the haughty vaunting style which became the most striking characteristic of that intoxicated people, were perpetual irritations of the national spirit and pride of Europe, and implanted a deep hatred towards the new and insulting empire, which waited but for a favorable moment to repay with interest the debt of humiliation.

The condition of Europe forbade, as we believe, the establishment of universal monarchy by mere physical force. The sword, however important, was now to play but a secondary part. The true course for Napoleon seems to us to have been indicated, not only by the state of Europe, but by the means which France in the beginning of her revolution had found most effectual. He should have identified himself with some great interests, opinion, or institutions, by which he might have bound to himself a large

party in every nation. He should have contrived to make at least a specious cause against all old establishments. To contrast himself most strikingly and most advantageously with former governments, should have been the key of his policy. He should have placed himself at the head of a new order of things, which should have worn the face of an improvement of the social state. Nor did the subversion of republican forms prevent his adoption of this course, or of some other which would have secured to him the sympathy of multitudes. He might still have drawn some broad lines between his own administration and that of other states, tending to throw the old dynasties into the shade. He might have cast away all the pageantry and forms of courts, distinguished himself by the simplicity of his establishments, and exaggerated the relief which he gave to his people, by saving them the burdens of a wasteful and luxurious court. He might have insisted on the great benefits that had accrued to France from the establishment of uniform laws, which protected alike all classes of men; and he might have virtually pledged himself to the subversion of the feudal inequalities which still disfigured Europe. He might have insisted on the favorable changes to be introduced into property, by abolishing the entails which fettered it, the rights of primogeniture, and the exclusive privileges of a haughty aristocracy. He might have found abuses enough against which to array himself as a champion. By becoming the head of new institutions, which would have involved the transfer of power into new hands, and would have offered to the people a real improvement, he might every where have summoned to his standard the bold and enterprising, and might have disarmed the national prejudices to which he fell a prey. Revolution was still the true instrument of power. In a word, Napoleon lived at a period when he could only establish a durable and universal control, through principles and institutions of some kind or other, to which he would seem to be devoted.

It was impossible, however, for such a man as Napoleon to adopt, perhaps to conceive, a system such as has now been traced; for it was wholly at war with that egotistical, selfrelying, selfexaggerating principle, which was the most striking feature of his mind. He imagined himself able, not only to conquer nations, but to hold

them together by the awe and admiration which his own character would inspire ; and this bond he preferred to every other. An indirect sway, a control of nations by means of institutions, principles, or prejudices, of which he was to be only the apostle and defender, was utterly inconsistent with that vehemence of will, that passion for astonishing mankind, and that persuasion of his own invincibleness, which were his master feelings, and which made force his darling instrument of dominion. He chose to be the great, palpable, and sole bond of his empire ; to have his image reflected from every establishment ; to be the center, in which every ray of glory should meet, and from which every impulse should be propagated. In consequence of this egotism, he never dreamed of adapting himself to the moral condition of the world. The sword was his chosen weapon, and he used it without disguise. He insulted nations as well as sovereigns. He did not attempt to gild their chains, or to fit the yoke gently to their necks. The excess of his extortions, the audacity of his claims, and the insolent language in which Europe was spoken of as the vassal of the great empire, discovered, that he expected to reign, not only without linking himself with the interests, prejudices, and national feelings of men, but by setting all at defiance.

It would be easy to point out a multitude of instances in which he sacrificed the only policy by which he could prevail, to the persuasion, that his own greatness could more than balance whatever opposition his violence might awaken. In an age in which Christianity was exerting some power, there was certainly a degree of deference due to the moral convictions of society. But Napoleon thought himself more than a match for the moral instincts and sentiments of our nature. He thought himself able to cover the most atrocious deeds by the splendor of his name, and even to extort applause for crimes by the brilliancy of his success. He took no pains to conciliate esteem. In his own eyes he was mightier than conscience ; and thus he turned against himself the power and resentment of virtue, in every breast where that divine principle yet found a home.

Through the same blinding egotism, he was anxious to fill the thrones of Europe with men bearing his own name, and to multiply every where images of himself. Instead of placing over con-

quered countries efficient men, taken from themselves, who, by upholding better institutions, would carry with them large masses of the people, and who would still, by their hostility to the old dynasties, link their fortunes with his own, he placed over nations such men as Jerome and Murat. He thus spread a jealousy of his power, whilst he rendered it insecure; for as none of the princes of his creation, however well disposed, were allowed to identify themselves with their subjects, and to take root in the public heart, but were compelled to act, openly and without disguise, as satellites and prefects of the French Emperor; they gained no hold on their subjects, and could bring no strength to their master in his hour of peril. In none of his arrangements did Napoleon think of securing to his cause the attachment of nations. Astonishment, awe, and force were his weapons, and his own great name the chosen pillar of his throne.

So far was Bonaparte from magnifying the contrast and distinctions between himself and the old dynasties of Europe, and from attaching men to himself by new principles and institutions, that he had the great weakness, for so we view it, to revive the old forms of monarchy, and to ape the manners of the old court, and thus to connect himself with the herd of legitimate sovereigns. This was not only to rob his government of that imposing character which might have been given to it, and of that interest which it might have inspired, as an improvement on former institutions, but was to become competitor in a race in which he could not but be distanced. He could indeed pluck crowns from the heads of monarchs; but he could not by any means infuse their blood into his veins, associate with himself the ideas which are attached to a long line of ancestry, or give to his court the grace of manners which belongs to older establishments. His true policy was, to throw contempt on distinctions which he could not rival; and had he possessed the genius and spirit of the founder of a new era, he would have substituted for a crown, and for other long worn badges of power, a new and simple style of grandeur, and new insignia of dignity, more consonant with an enlightened age, and worthy of one who disdained to be a vulgar king. By the policy which he adopted, if it be worthy of that name, he became a vulgar king, and showed a mind incapable of

answering the wants and demands of his age. It is well known, that the progress of intelligence had done much in Europe, to weaken men's reverence for pageantry and show. Nobles had learned to lay aside their trappings in ordinary life, and to appear as gentlemen. Even royalty had begun to retrench its pomp ; and in the face of all this improvement, Bonaparte stooped from his height, to study costumes, to legislate about court dresses and court manners, and to outshine his brother monarchs in their own line. He desired to add the glory of master of ceremonies to that of conqueror of nations. In his anxiety to belong to the caste of kings, he exacted scrupulously the observance and etiquette with which they are approached. Not satisfied with this approximation to the old sovereigns, with whom he had no common interest, and from whom he could not have removed himself too far, he sought to ally himself by marriage with the royal families in Europe, to engraft himself and his posterity on an old imperial tree. This was the very way to turn back opinion into its old channels ; to carry back Europe to its old prejudices ; to facilitate the restoration of its old order ; to preach up legitimacy ; to crush every hope that he was to work a beneficent change among nations. It may seem strange, that his egotism did not preserve him from the imitation of antiquated monarchy. But his egotism, though excessive, was not lofty, nor was it seconded by a genius, rich and inventive, except in war.

We have now followed Napoleon to the height of his power, and given our views of the policy by which he hoped to make that power perpetual and unbounded. His fall is easily explained. It had its origin in that spirit of selfreliance and selfexaggeration, of which we have seen so many proofs. It began in Spain. That country was a province in reality. He wanted to make it one in name ; to place over it a Bonaparte ; to make it a more striking manifestation of his power. For this purpose, he 'kidnapped' its royal family, stirred up the unconquerable spirit of its people, and, after shedding on its plains and mountains the best blood of France, lost it forever. Next came his expedition against Russia, an expedition against which his wisest counsellors remonstrated, but which had every recommendation to a man who regarded himself as an exception to his race, and able to triumph

over the laws of nature. So insane were his selfconfidence and impatience of opposition, that he drove by his outrages Sweden, the old ally of France, into the arms of Russia, at the very moment that he was about to throw himself into the heart of that mighty empire. On his Russian campaign we have no desire to enlarge. Of all the mournful pages of history, none are more sad than that which records the retreat of the French army from Moscow. We remember, that when the intelligence of Napoleon's discomfiture in Russia first reached this country, we were among those who exulted in it, thinking only of the results. But when subsequent and minuter accounts brought distinctly before our eyes that unequalled army of France, broken, famished, slaughtered, seeking shelter under snowdrifts, and perishing by intense cold, we looked back on our joy with almost a consciousness of guilt, and expiated by a sincere grief our insensibility to the sufferings of our fellow creatures. We understand that many interesting notices of Napoleon, as he appeared in this disastrous campaign, are given in the *Memoirs of Count Segur*, a book from which we have been repelled by the sorrows and miseries which it details. We can conceive few subjects more worthy of Shakespeare than the mind of Napoleon at this moment, when his fate was sealed; when the tide of his victories was suddenly stopped and rolled backwards; when his dreams of invincibleness were broken as by a peal of thunder; when the word which had awed nations died away, on the bleak waste, a powerless sound; and when he, whose spirit Europe could not bound, fled in fear from a captive's doom. The shock must have been tremendous to a mind so imperious, scornful, and unschooled to humiliation. The intense agony of that moment when he gave the unusual orders, to retreat; the desolateness of his soul, when he saw his brave soldiers, and his chosen guards sinking in the snows, and perishing in crowds around him; his unwillingness to receive the details of his losses, lest selfpossession should fail him; the levity and badinage of his interview with the Abbé de Pradt at Warsaw, discovering a mind laboring to throw off an insupportable weight, wrestling with itself, struggling against misery; and though last not least, his unconquerable purpose, still clinging to lost empire as the only good of life, — these workings of such a spirit would

have furnished to the great dramatist a theme, worthy of his transcendent powers.

By the irretrievable disasters of the Russian campaign, the empire of the world was effectually placed beyond the grasp of Napoleon. The tide of conquest had ebbed, never to return. The spell which had bound the nations was dissolved. He was no longer the Invincible. The weight of military power, which had kept down the spirit of nations, was removed, and their long smothered sense of wrong and insult broke forth like the fires of a volcano. Bonaparte might still, perhaps, have secured the throne of France; but that of Europe was gone. This however, he did not, could not, would not understand. He had connected with himself too obstinately the character of the world's master, to be able to relinquish it. Amidst the dark omens which gathered round him, he still saw in his past wonderful escapes, and in his own exaggerated energies, the means of rebuilding his fallen power. Accordingly the thought of abandoning his pretensions does not seem to have crossed his mind, and his irreparable defeat was only a summons to new exertion. — We doubt, indeed, whether Napoleon, if he could have understood fully his condition, would have adopted a different course. Though despairing, he would probably have raised new armies, and fought to the last. To a mind which has placed its whole happiness in having no equal, the thought of descending to the level even of kings, is intolerable. Napoleon's mind had been stretched by such ideas of universal empire, that France, though reaching from the Rhine to the Alps, seemed narrow to him. He could not be shut up in it. Accordingly, as his fortunes darkened, we see no signs of relenting. He could not wear, he said, 'a tarnished crown,' that is, a crown no brighter than those of Austria and Russia. He continued to use a master's tone. He showed no change, but such as opposition works in the obstinate. He lost his temper and grew sour. He heaped reproaches on his marshals, and the legislative body. He insulted Metternich, the statesman, on whom, above all others, his fate depended. He irritated Murat by sarcasms, which rankled within him, and accelerated, if they did not determine, his desertion of his master. It is a striking example of retribution, that the very vehemence and

sternness of his will, which had borne him onward to dominion, now drove him on to the rejection of terms which would have left him a formidable power, and thus made his ruin entire. Refusing to take counsel of events, he persevered in fighting with a stubbornness, which reminds us of a spoiled child, who sullenly grasps what he knows he must relinquish, struggles without hope, and does not give over resistance, until his little fingers are one by one unclenched from the object on which he has set his heart. Thus fell Napoleon. We shall follow his history no farther. His retreat to Elba, his irruption into France, his signal overthrow, and his banishment to St. Helena, though they add to the romance of his history, throw no new light on his character, and would of course contribute nothing to our present object. There are indeed incidents in this portion of his life which are somewhat inconsistent with the firmness and conscious superiority which belonged to him. But a man, into whose character so much impulse, and so little principle entered, must not be expected to preserve unblemished, in such hard reverses, the dignity and self-respect of an emperor and a hero.

In the course of these remarks, our views of the Conqueror, of the First Consul, and of the Emperor, have been given plainly and freely. The subject, however, is so important and interesting, that we have thought it worth our while, though at the hazard of some repetition, to bring together, in a narrower compass, what seem to us the great leading features of the intellectual and moral character of Napoleon Bonaparte.

His intellect was distinguished by rapidity of thought. He understood by a glance what most men, and superior men, could learn only by study. He darted to a conclusion rather by intuition than reasoning. In war, which was the only subject of which he was master, he seized in an instant on the great points of his own and his enemy's positions; and combined at once the movements, by which an overpowering force might be thrown with unexpected fury on a vulnerable part of the hostile line, and the fate of an army be decided in a day. He understood war as a science; but his mind was too bold, rapid, and irrepressible, to be enslaved by the technics of his profession. He found the old

armies fighting by rule, and he discovered the true characteristic of genius, which, without despising rules, knows when and how to break them. He understood thoroughly the immense moral power, which is gained by originality and rapidity of operation. He astonished and paralyzed his enemies by his unforeseen and impetuous assaults, by the suddenness with which the storm of battle burst upon them ; and, whilst giving to his soldiers the advantages of modern discipline, breathed into them, by his quick and decisive movements, the enthusiasm of ruder ages. This power of disheartening the foe, and of spreading through his own ranks a confidence, and exhilarating courage, which made war a pastime, and seemed to make victory sure, distinguished Napoleon in an age of uncommon military talent, and was one main instrument of his future power.

The wonderful effects of that rapidity of thought by which Bonaparte was marked, the signal success of his new mode of warfare, and the almost incredible speed with which his fame was spread through nations, had no small influence in fixing his character and determining for a period the fate of empires. These stirring influences infused a new consciousness of his own might. They gave intensity and audacity to his ambition ; gave form and substance to his indefinite visions of glory, and raised his fiery hopes to empire. The burst of admiration which his early career called forth, must in particular have had an influence in imparting to his ambition that modification by which it was characterized, and which contributed alike to its success and to its fall. He began with *astonishing* the world, with producing a sudden and universal *sensation*, such as modern times had not witnessed. To *astonish* as well as to sway by his energies, became the great aim of his life. Henceforth to rule was not enough for Bonaparte. He wanted to amaze, to dazzle, to overpower men's souls, by striking, bold, magnificent, and unanticipated results. To govern ever so absolutely would not have satisfied him, if he must have governed silently. He wanted to reign through wonder and awe, by the grandeur and terror of his name, by displays of power which would rivet on him every eye, and make him the theme of every tongue. Power was his supreme object ; but a power which should be gazed at as well as felt, which should strike men as a

prodigy, which should shake old thrones as an earthquake, and by the suddenness of its new creations, should awaken something of the submissive wonder which miraculous agency inspires.

Such seems to us to have been the distinction, or characteristic modification of his love of fame. It was a diseased passion for a kind of admiration, which, from the principles of our nature, cannot be enduring, and which demands for its support perpetual and more stimulating novelty. Mere esteem he would have scorned. Calm admiration, though universal and enduring, would have been insipid. He wanted to electrify and overwhelm. He lived for effect. The world was his theatre, and he cared little what part he played, if he might walk the sole hero on the stage, and call forth bursts of applause, which would silence all other fame. In war, the triumphs which he coveted were those in which he seemed to sweep away his foes like a whirlwind; and the immense and unparalleled sacrifice of his own soldiers, in the rapid marches and daring assaults to which he owed his victories, in no degree diminished their worth to the victor. In peace, he delighted to hurry through his dominions; to multiply himself by his rapid movements; to gather at a glance the capacities of improvement which every important place possessed; to suggest plans which would startle by their originality and vastness; to project in an instant works which a life could not accomplish, and to leave behind the impression of a superhuman energy.

Our sketch of Bonaparte would be imperfect indeed, if we did not add, that he was characterized by nothing more strongly than by the spirit of *selfexaggeration*. The singular energy of his intellect and will, through which he had mastered so many rivals and foes, and overcome what seemed insuperable obstacles, inspired a consciousness of being something more than man. His strong original tendencies to pride and selfexaltation, fed and pampered by strange success and unbounded applause, swelled into an almost insane conviction of superhuman greatness. In his own view, he stood apart from other men. He was not to be measured by the standard of humanity. He was not to be retarded by difficulties to which all others yielded. He was not to be subjected to laws and obligations which all others were expected to obey. Nature and the human will were to bend to his power.

He was the child and favorite of fortune, and if not the lord, the chief object of destiny. His history shows a spirit of selfexaggeration, unrivaled in enlightened ages, and which reminds us of an oriental king to whom incense had been burnt from his birth as to a deity. This was the chief source of his crimes. He wanted the sentiment of a common nature with his fellow beings. He had no sympathies with his race. That feeling of brotherhood, which is developed in truly great souls with peculiar energy, and through which they give up themselves willing victims, joyful sacrifices, to the interests of mankind, was wholly unknown to him. His heart, amidst all its wild beatings, never had one throb of disinterested love. The ties which bind man to man he broke asunder. The proper happiness of a man, which consists in the victory of moral energy and social affection over the selfish passions, he cast away for the lonely joy of a despot. With powers which might have made him a glorious representative and minister of the beneficent Divinity, and with natural sensibilities which might have been exalted into sublime virtues, he chose to separate himself from his kind, to forego their love, esteem, and gratitude, that he might become their gaze, their fear, their wonder; and for this selfish, solitary good, parted with peace and imperishable renown.

This insolent exaltation of himself above the race to which he belonged, broke out in the beginning of his career. His first success in Italy gave him the tone of a master, and he never laid it aside to his last hour. One can hardly help being struck with the *natural* manner with which he arrogates supremacy in his conversation and proclamations. We never feel as if he were putting on a lordly air, or borrowing an imperious tone. In his proudest claims, he speaks from his own mind, and in native language. His style is swollen, but never strained, as if he were conscious of playing a part above his real claims. Even when he was foolish and impious enough to arrogate miraculous powers and a mission from God, his language showed, that he thought there was something in his character and exploits to give a color to his blasphemous pretensions. The empire of the world seemed to him to be in a measure his due, for nothing short of it corresponded with his conceptions of himself; and he did not use mere verbiage,

but spoke a language to which he gave some credit, when he called his successive conquests 'the fulfilment of his destiny.'

This spirit of selfexaggeration wrought its own misery, and drew down upon him terrible punishments; and this it did by vitiating and perverting his high powers. First, it diseased his fine intellect, gave imagination the ascendancy over judgment, turned the inventiveness and fruitfulness of his mind into rash, impatient, restless energies, and thus precipitated him into projects, which, as the wisdom of his counsellors pronounced, were fraught with ruin. To a man whose vanity took him out of the rank of human beings, no foundation for reasoning was left. All things seemed possible. His genius and his fortune were not to be bounded by the barriers which experience had assigned to human powers. Ordinary rules did not apply to him. His imagination, disordered by his selfexaggerating spirit and by unbounded flattery, leaped over appalling obstacles to the prize which inflamed his ambition. He even found excitement and motives in obstacles, before which other men would have wavered; for these would enhance the glory of triumph, and give a new thrill to the admiration of the world. Accordingly he again and again plunged into the depths of an enemy's country, and staked his whole fortune and power on a single battle. To be rash was indeed the necessary result of his selfexalting and selfrelying spirit; for to dare what no other man would dare, to accomplish what no other man would attempt, was the very way to display himself as a superior being in his own and others' eyes. — To be impatient and restless was another necessary issue of the attributes we have described. The calmness of wisdom was denied him. He, who was next to omnipotent in his own eyes, and who delighted to strike and astonish by sudden and conspicuous operations, could not brook delay or wait for the slow operations of time. A work which was to be gradually matured by the joint agency of various causes, could not suit a man who wanted to be felt as the great, perhaps only, cause; who wished to stamp his own agency in the most glaring characters on whatever he performed, and who hoped to rival by a sudden energy the steady and progressive works of nature. Hence so many of his projects were never completed, or only announced. They swelled however the tide of flattery, which ascribed to him

the completion of what was not yet begun, whilst his restless spirit, rushing to new enterprises, forgot its pledges, and left the promised prodigies of his creative genius to exist only in the records of adulation. — Thus the rapid and inventive intellect of Bonaparte was depraved, and failed to achieve a growing and durable greatness, through his selfexaggerating spirit. It reared indeed a vast and imposing structure, but disproportioned, disjointed, without strength, without foundations. One strong blast was enough to shake and shatter it, nor could his genius uphold it. Happy would it have been for his fame, had he been buried in its ruins.

One of the striking properties of Bonaparte's character was decision; and this, as we have already seen, was perverted by the spirit of selfexaggeration, into an inflexible stubbornness, which counsel could not enlighten, nor circumstances bend. Having taken the first step, he pressed onward. His purpose he wished others to regard as a law of nature, or a decree of destiny. It *must* be accomplished. Resistance but strengthened it; and so often had resistance been overborne, that he felt as if his unconquerable will, joined to his matchless intellect, could vanquish all things. On such a mind the warnings of human wisdom and of Providence were spent in vain; and the Man of Destiny lived to teach others, if not himself, the weakness and folly of that all-defying decision, which arrays the purposes of a mortal with the immutableness of the counsels of the Most High.

A still more fatal influence of the spirit of selfexaggeration which characterized Bonaparte, remains to be named. It depraved to an extraordinary degree his moral sense. It did not obliterate altogether the ideas of duty, but, by a singular perversion, it impelled him to apply them exclusively to others. It never seemed to enter his thought, that he was subject to the great obligations of morality, which all others are called to respect. He was an exempted being. Whatever stood in his way to empire, he was privileged to remove. Treaties only bound his enemies. No nation had rights but his own France. He claimed a monopoly in perfidy and violence. He was not naturally cruel; but when human life obstructed his progress, it was a lawful prey, and murder and assassination occasioned as little compunction as war. The most luminous exposition of his moral code was given in his

counsels to the king of Holland. 'Never forget, that in the situation to which my political system and the interests of my empire have called you, your first duty is towards ME, your second towards France. All your other duties, even those towards the people whom I have called you to govern, rank after these.' To his own mind he was the source and center of duty. He was too peculiar and exalted, to be touched by that vulgar stain, called guilt. Crimes ceased to be such, when perpetrated by himself. Accordingly he always speaks of his transgressions as of indifferent acts. He never imagined that they tarnished his glory, or diminished his claim on the homage of the world. In St. Helena, though talking perpetually of himself, and often reviewing his guilty career, we are not aware that a single compunction escapes him. He speaks of his life as calmly as if it had been consecrated to duty and beneficence, whilst in the same breath he has the audacity to reproach unsparingly the faithlessness of almost every individual and nation with whom he had been connected. We doubt whether history furnishes so striking an example of the moral blindness and obduracy to which an unbounded egotism exposes and abandons the mind.

His spirit of selfexaggeration was seen in his openness to adulation. Policy indeed prompted him to put his praises into the mouths of the venal slaves who administered his despotism. But flattery would not have been permitted to swell into exaggerations, now nauseous, now ludicrous, and now impious, if, in the bosom of the chief, there had not lodged a flatterer who sounded a louder note of praise than all around him. He was remarkably sensitive to opinion, and resented as a wrong the suppression of his praises. The press of all countries was watched, and free states were called upon to curb it for daring to take liberties with his name. Even in books published in France on general topics, he expected a recognition of his authority. Works of talent were suppressed, when their authors refused to offer incense at the new shrine. He wished indeed to stamp his name on the literature, as on the legislation, policy, warfare of his age, and to compel genius, whose pages survive statues, columns, and empires, to take a place among his tributaries.

We close our view of Bonaparte's character, by saying, that his original propensities, released from restraint, and pampered by indulgence, to a degree seldom allowed to mortals, grew up into a spirit of despotism as stern and absolute as ever usurped the human heart. The love of power and supremacy absorbed, consumed him. No other passion, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness, divided his mind with the passion for dominion and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Before this, duty, honor, love, humanity, fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him ; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity, to make room for a stranger, who might be more subservient to his power. He was affectionate, we are told, to his brothers and mother ; but his brothers, the moment they ceased to be his tools, were disgraced ; and his mother, it is said, was not allowed to sit in the presence of her imperial son.* He was sometimes softened, we are told, by the sight of the field of battle strewn with the wounded and dead. But if the Moloch of his ambition claimed new heaps of slain tomorrow, it was never denied. With all his sensibility, he gave millions to the sword, with as little compunction as he would have brushed away so many insects, which had infested his march. To him, all human will, desire, power, were to bend. His superiority, none might question. He insulted the fallen, who had contracted the guilt of opposing his progress ; and not even woman's loveliness, and the dignity of a queen, could give shelter from his contumely. His allies were his vassals, nor was their vassalage concealed. Too lofty to use the arts of conciliation, preferring command to persuasion, overbearing, and all-grasping, he spread distrust, exasperation, fear, and revenge through Europe ; and when the day of retribution came, the old antipathies and mutual jealousies of nations were swallowed up in one burning purpose to prostrate the common tyrant, the universal foe.

* See 'America,' page 57. We should not give this very unamiable trait of Napoleon's domestic character, but on authority which we cannot question.

Such was Napoleon Bonaparte. But some will say, he was still a great man. This we mean not to deny. But we would have it understood, that there are various kinds or orders of greatness, and that the highest did not belong to Bonaparte. There are different orders of greatness. Among these the first rank is unquestionably due to *moral* greatness, or magnanimity; to that sublime energy, by which the soul, smitten with the love of virtue, binds itself indissolubly, for life and for death, to truth and duty; espouses as its own the interests of human nature; scorns all meanness and defies all peril; hears in its own conscience a voice louder than threatenings and thunders; withstands all the powers of the universe, which would sever it from the cause of freedom, virtue, and religion; reposes an unfaltering trust in God in the darkest hour, and is ever 'ready to be offered up' on the altar of its country or of mankind. Of this moral greatness, which throws all other forms of greatness into obscurity, we see not a trace or spark in Napoleon. Though clothed with the power of a God, the thought of consecrating himself to the introduction of a new and higher era, to the exaltation of the character and condition of his race, seems never to have dawned on his mind. The spirit of disinterestedness and selfsacrifice seems not to have waged a moment's war with selfwill and ambition. His ruling passions, indeed, were singularly at variance with magnanimity. Moral greatness has too much simplicity, is too unostentatious, too self-subsistent, and enters into others' interests with too much heartiness, to live a day for what Napoleon always lived, to make itself the theme, and gaze, and wonder of a dazzled world.—Next to moral, comes *intellectual* greatness, or genius in the highest sense of that word; and by this, we mean that sublime capacity of thought, through which the soul, smitten with the love of the true and the beautiful, essays to comprehend the universe, soars into the heavens, penetrates the earth, penetrates itself, questions the past, anticipates the future, traces out the general and all-comprehending laws of nature, binds together by innumerable affinities and relations all the objects of its knowledge, and, not satisfied with what exists and with what is finite, frames to itself ideal excellence, loveliness, and grandeur. This is the greatness which belongs to philosophers, inspired poets, and to the master spirits in

the fine arts. — Next comes the greatness of *action*; and by this we mean the sublime power of conceiving and executing bold and extensive plans; of constructing and bringing to bear on a mighty object a complicated machinery of means, energies, and arrangements, and of accomplishing great outward effects. To this head belongs the greatness of Bonaparte, and that he possessed it, we need not prove, and none will be hardy enough to deny. A man, who raised himself from obscurity to a throne, who changed the face of the world, who made himself felt through powerful and civilized nations, who sent the terror of his name across seas and oceans, whose will was pronounced and feared as destiny, whose donatives were crowns, whose antechamber was thronged by submissive princes, who broke down the awful barrier of the Alps and made them a highway, and whose fame was spread beyond the boundaries of civilization to the steppes of the Cossack, and the deserts of the Arab, — a man, who has left this record of himself in history, has taken out of our hands the question, whether he shall be called great. All must concede to him a sublime power of action, an energy equal to great effects.

We are not disposed, however, to consider him as pre-eminent even in this order of greatness. War was his chief sphere. He gained his ascendancy in Europe by the sword. But war is not the field for the highest active talent, and Napoleon, we suspect, was conscious of this truth. The glory of being the greatest general of his age, would not have satisfied him. He would have scorned to take his place by the side of Marlborough or Turenne. It was as the founder of an empire, which threatened for a time to comprehend the world, and which demanded other talents besides that of war, that he challenged unrivalled fame. And here we question his claim. Here we cannot award him supremacy. The project of universal empire, however imposing, was not original. The revolutionary governments of France had adopted it before; nor can we consider it as a sure indication of greatness, when we remember that the weak and vain mind of Louis XIV. was large enough to cherish it. The question is, — Did Napoleon bring to this design the capacity of advancing it by bold and original conceptions, adapted to an age of civilization, and of singular intellectual and moral excitement? Did he discover new foundations

of power? Did he frame new bonds of union for subjugated nations? Did he discover, or originate, some common interests by which his empire might be held together? Did he breathe a spirit which should supplant the old national attachments, or did he invent any substitutes for those vulgar instruments of force and corruption which any and every usurper would have used? Never in the records of time, did the world furnish such materials to work with, such means of modeling nations afresh, of building up a new power, of introducing a new era, as did Europe at the period of the French revolution. Never was the human mind so capable of new impulses. And did Napoleon prove himself equal to the condition of the world? Do we detect one original conception in his means of universal empire? Did he seize on the enthusiasm of his age, that powerful principle, more efficient than arms or policy, and bend it to his purpose? What did he do but follow the beaten track — but apply force and fraud in their very coarsest forms? Napoleon showed a vulgar mind, when he assumed selfinterest as the sole spring of human action. With the sword in one hand and bribes in the other, he imagined himself absolute master of the human mind. The strength of moral, national, and domestic feeling, he could not comprehend. The finest, and after all, the most powerful elements in human nature, hardly entered into his conceptions of it; and how then could he have established a durable power over the human race? We want little more to show his want of originality and comprehensiveness as the founder of an empire, than the simple fact, that he chose as his chief counsellors Talleyrand and Fouché, names which speak for themselves. We may judge of the greatness of the master spirit, from the minds which he found most congenial with his own. In war, Bonaparte was great; for he was bold, original, and creative. Beyond the camp he indeed showed talent, but not superior to that of other eminent men.

There have been two circumstances, which have done much to disarm or weaken the strong moral reprobation with which Bonaparte ought to have been regarded, and which we deem worthy of notice. We refer to the wrongs which he is supposed to have suffered at St. Helena, and to the unworthy use which the Allied

Powers have made of their triumph over Napoleon. First, his supposed wrongs at St. Helena have excited a sympathy in his behalf, which has thrown a veil over his crimes. We are not disposed to deny, that an unwarrantable, because unnecessary, severity was exercised towards Bonaparte. We think it not very creditable to the British government, that it tortured a sensitive captive by refusing him a title which he had long worn. We think that not only religion and humanity, but selfrespect forbids us to inflict a single useless pang on a fallen foe. But we should be weak indeed, if the moral judgments and feelings, with which Napoleon's career ought to be reviewed, should give place to sympathy with the sufferings by which it was closed. With regard to the scruples, which not a few have expressed as to the right of banishing him to St. Helena, we can only say, that our consciences are not yet refined to any such exquisite delicacy, as to be at all sensitive on this particular. We admire nothing more in Bonaparte, than the effrontery with which he claimed protection from the laws of nations. That a man, who had set these laws at open defiance, should fly to them for shelter; that the oppressor of the world should claim its sympathy as an oppressed man, and that his claim should find advocates; these things are to be set down among the extraordinary events of this extraordinary age. Truly, the human race is in a pitiable state. It may be trampled on, spoiled, loaded like a beast of burden, made the prey of rapacity, insolence, and the sword; but it must not touch a hair, or disturb the pillow of one of its oppressors, unless it can find chapter and verse in the code of national law, to authorize its rudeness towards the privileged offender. For ourselves, we should rejoice to see every tyrant, whether a usurper or hereditary prince, fastened to a lonely rock in the ocean. Whoever gives clear, undoubted proof, that he is prepared and sternly resolved to make the earth a slaughterhouse, and to crush every will adverse to his own, ought to be caged like a wild beast: and to require mankind to proceed against him according to written laws and precedents, as if he were a private citizen in a quiet court of justice, is just as rational as to require a man, in imminent peril from an assassin, to wait and prosecute his murderer according to the most protracted forms of law. There are great solemn rights of nature, which precede

laws, and on which law is founded. There are great exigences in human affairs, which speak for themselves, and need no precedent to teach the right path. There are awful periods in the history of our race, which do not belong to its ordinary state, and which are not to be governed and judged by ordinary rules. Such a period was that, when Bonaparte, by infraction of solemn engagements, had thrown himself into France, and convulsed all Europe; and they, who confound this with the ordinary events of history, and see in Bonaparte but an ordinary foe to the peace and independence of nations, have certainly very different intellects from our own.

We confess, too, that we are not only unable to see the wrong done to Napoleon in sending him to St. Helena, but that we cannot muster up much sympathy for the inconveniences and privations which he endured there. Our sympathies in this particular are wayward and untractable. When we would carry them to that solitary island, and fasten them on the illustrious victim of British cruelty, they will not tarry there, but take their flight across the Mediterranean to Jaffa, and across the Atlantic to the platform where the Duke d'Enghien was shot, to the prison of Tous-saint, and to the fields of battle where thousands at his bidding lay weltering in blood. When we strive to fix our thoughts upon the sufferings of the injured hero, other and more terrible sufferings, of which he was the cause, rush upon us; and his complaints, however loud and angry, are drowned by groans and execrations which fill our ears from every region which he traversed. We have no tears to spare for fallen greatness, when that greatness was founded in crime, and reared by force and perfidy. We reserve them for those on whose ruin it rose. We keep our sympathies for our race, for human nature in its humbler forms, for the impoverished peasant, the widowed mother, the violated virgin; and are even perverse enough to rejoice, that the ocean has a prisonhouse, where the author of those miseries may be safely lodged. Bonaparte's history is to us too solemn, the wrongs for which humanity and freedom arraign him, are too flagrant, to allow us to play the part of sentimentalists around his grave at St. Helena. We leave this to the more refined age in which we live; and we do so in the hope that an age is coming of less tender

mould, but of loftier, sterner feeling, and of deeper sympathy with the whole human race. Should our humble page then live, we trust with an undoubting faith, that the uncompromising indignation with which we plead the cause of our oppressed and insulted nature, will not be set down to the account of our vindictiveness and hardness of heart.

We observed that the moral indignation of many towards Bonaparte had been impaired or turned away, not only by his supposed wrongs, but by the unworthy use which his conquerors made of their triumph. We are told, that bad as was his despotism, the Holy Alliance is a worse one; and that Napoleon was less a scourge, than the present coalition of the continental monarchs, framed for the systematic suppression of freedom. By such reasoning, his crimes are cloaked, and his fall made a theme of lamentation. It is not one of the smallest errors and sins of the Allied Sovereigns, that they have contrived, by their base policy, to turn the resentments and moral displeasure of men from the usurper upon themselves. For these sovereigns we have no defence to offer. We yield to none in detestation of the Holy Alliance, profanely so called. To us its doctrines are as false and pestilent, as any broached by Jacobinism. The Allied Monarchs are adding to the other wrongs of despots, that of flagrant ingratitude; of ingratitude to the generous and brave nations, to whom they owe their thrones, whose spirit of independence and patriotism, and whose hatred of the oppressor, contributed more than standing armies, to raise up the fallen, and to strengthen the falling monarchies of Europe. Be it never forgotten in the records of despotism, let history record it on her most durable tablet, that the first use made by the principal continental sovereigns of their regained or confirmed power, was, to conspire against the hopes and rights of the nations by whom they had been saved; and to combine the military power of Europe against free institutions, against the press, against the spirit of liberty and patriotism which had sprung up in the glorious struggle with Napoleon, against the right of the people to exert an influence on the governments by which their dearest interests were to be controlled. Never be it forgotten, that such was the honor of sovereigns, such their requital for the blood which had been shed freely in their defence.

Freedom and humanity send up a solemn and prevailing cry against them to that tribunal, where kings and subjects are soon to stand as equals.

But still we should be strangely blind, if we were not to feel that the fall of Napoleon was a blessing to the world. Who can look, for example, at France, and not see there a degree of freedom which could never have grown up under the terrible frown of the usurper? True, Bonaparte's life, though it seemed a charmed one, must at length have ended; and we are told that then his empire would have been broken, and that the general crash, by some inexplicable process, would have given birth to a more extensive and durable liberty than can now be hoped. But such anticipations seem to us to be built on a strange inattention to the nature and inevitable consequences of Napoleon's power. It was wholly a military power. He was literally turning Europe into a camp, and drawing its best talent into one occupation, war. Thus Europe was retracing its steps to those ages of calamity and darkness, when the only law was the sword. The progress of centuries, which had consisted chiefly in the substitution of intelligence, public opinion, and other mild and rational influences, for brutal force, was to be reversed. At Bonaparte's death, his empire must, indeed, have been dissolved; but military chiefs, like Alexander's lieutenants, would have divided it. The sword alone would have shaped its future communities; and after years of desolation and bloodshed, Europe would have found, not repose, but a respite, an armed truce, under warriors, whose only title to empire would have been their own good blades, and the weight of whose thrones would have been upheld by military force alone. Amidst such convulsions, during which the press would have been every where fettered, and the military spirit would have triumphed over and swallowed up the spirit and glory of letters and liberal arts, we greatly fear, that the human intellect would have lost its present impulse, its thirst for progress, and would have fallen back towards barbarism. Let not the friends of freedom bring dishonor on themselves or desert their cause, by instituting comparisons between Napoleon and legitimate sovereigns, which may be construed into eulogies on the former. For ourselves, we have no sympathy with tyranny, whether it bear the name of usurpation or

legitimacy. We are not pleading the cause of the allied sovereigns. In our judgment, they have contracted the very guilt against which they have pretended to combine. In our apprehension, a conspiracy against the rights of the human race, is as foul a crime as rebellion against the rights of sovereigns ; nor is there less of treason in warring against public freedom, than in assailing royal power. Still we are bound in truth to confess, that the allied sovereigns are not to be ranked with Bonaparte, whose design against the independence of nations and the liberties of the world, in this age of civilization, liberal thinking, and christian knowledge, is in our estimation the most nefarious enterprise recorded in history.

The series of events, which it has been our province to review, offers subjects of profound thought and solemn instruction to the moralist and politician. We have retraced it with many painful feelings. It shows us a great people, who had caught some indistinct glimpses of freedom, and of a nobler and a happier political constitution, betrayed by their leaders, and brought back, by a military despot, to heavier chains than they had broken. We see with indignation one man, a man like ourselves, subjecting whole nations to his absolute rule. It is this wrong and insult to our race which has chiefly moved us. Had a storm of God's ordination, passed over Europe, prostrating its capitals, sweeping off its villages, burying millions in ruins, we should have wept, we should have trembled. But in this there would have been only wretchedness. Now we also see debasement. To us there is something radically, and increasingly shocking, in the thought of one man's will becoming a law to his race ; in the thought of multitudes, of vast communities, surrendering conscience, intellect, their affections, their rights, their interests to the stern mandate of a fellow creature. When we see one word of a frail man on the throne of France, tearing a hundred thousand sons from their homes, breaking asunder the sacred ties of domestic life, sentencing myriads of the young to make murder their calling and rapacity their means of support, and extorting from nations their treasures to extend this ruinous sway, we are ready to ask ourselves, Is not this a dream ? And when the sad reality comes

home to us, we blush for a race which can stoop to such an abject lot. At length, indeed, we see the tyrant humbled, stripped of power ; but stripped by those who, with one exception, are not unwilling to play the despot on a narrower scale, and to break down the spirit of nations under the same iron sway.

How is it, that tyranny has thus triumphed ? that the hopes with which we greeted the French revolution have been crushed ? that an usurper plucked up the last roots of the tree of liberty, and planted despotism in its place ? The chief cause is not far to seek, nor can it be too often urged on the friends of freedom. France failed through the want of that moral preparation for liberty, without which the blessing cannot be secured. She was not ripe for the good she sought. She was too corrupt for freedom. France had indeed to contend with great political ignorance ; but had not ignorance been reinforced by deep moral defect, she might have won her way to free institutions. Her character forbade her to be free ; and it now seems strange that we could ever have expected her to secure this boon. How could we believe, that a liberty, of which that heartless scoffer, Voltaire, was a chief apostle, could have triumphed ? Most of the preachers of French liberty had thrown off all the convictions which ennobled the mind. Man's connexion with God they broke, for they declared that there was no God in whom to trust in the great struggle for liberty. Human immortality, that truth which is the seed of all greatness, they derided. To their philosophy, man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, an ephemeron, a worm, who was soon to rot and perish forever. What insanity was it to expect, that such men were to work out the emancipation of their race ! that in such hands the hopes and dearest rights of humanity were secure ! Liberty was tainted by their touch, polluted by their breath, and yet we trusted that it was to rise in health and glory from their embrace. We looked to men, who openly founded morality on private interest, for the sacrifices, the devotion, the heroic virtue, which freedom always demands from her assertors.

The great cause of the discomfiture of the late European struggle for liberty, is easily understood by an American, who recurs to the history of his own revolution. This issued prosperously, because it was begun and was conducted under the auspices of

private and public virtue. Our liberty did not come to us by accident, nor was it the gift of a few leaders ; but its seeds were sown plentifully in the minds of the whole people. It was rooted in the conscience and reason of the nation. It was the growth of deliberate convictions and generous principles liberally diffused. We had no Paris, no metropolis, which a few leaders swayed, and which sent forth its influences, like 'a mighty heart,' through dependent and subservient provinces. The country was all heart. The living principle pervaded the community, and every village added strength to the solemn purpose of being free. We have here an explanation of a striking fact in the history of our revolution ; we mean the want or absence of that description of great men, whom we meet in other countries ; men who, by their distinct and single agency, and by their splendid deeds, determine a nation's fate. There was too much greatness in the American people, to admit this overshadowing greatness of leaders. Accordingly the United States had no liberator, no political savior. Washington indeed conferred on us great blessings. But Washington was not a hero in the common sense of that word. We never spoke of him as the French did of Bonaparte, never talked of his eagle-eyed, irresistible genius, as if this were to work out our safety. We never lost our selfrespect. We felt that, under God, we were to be free through our own courage, energy, and wisdom, under the animating and guiding influences of this great and good mind. Washington served us chiefly by his sublime moral qualities, and not by transcendent talent, which, we apprehend, he did not possess. To him belonged the proud distinction of being the leader in a revolution, without awakening one doubt or solicitude as to the spotless purity of his purpose. His was the glory of being the brightest manifestation of the spirit which reigned in his country ; and in this way he became a source of energy, a bond of union, the center of an enlightened people's confidence. In such a revolution as that of France, Washington would have been nothing ; for that sympathy, which subsisted between him and his fellow citizens, and which was the secret of his power, would have been wanting. By an instinct, which is unerring, we call Washington, with grateful reverence, the Father of his Country, but not its Savior. A people, which wants a savior,

which does not possess an earnest and pledge of freedom in its own heart, is not yet ready to be free.

A great question here offers itself, at which we can only glance. If a moral preparation is required for freedom, how, it is asked, can Europe ever be free? How, under the despotisms which now crush the continent, can nations grow ripe for liberty? Is it to be hoped, that men will learn, in the school of slavery, the spirit and virtues, which, we are told, can alone work out their deliverance? In the absolute governments of Europe, the very instruments of forming an enlightened and generous love of freedom, are bent into the service of tyranny. The press is an echo of the servile doctrines of the court. The schools and seminaries of education are employed to taint the young mind with the maxims of despotism. Even Christianity is turned into a preacher of legitimacy, and its temples are desecrated by the abject teaching of unconditional submission. How then is the spirit of a wise and moral freedom to be generated and diffused? We have stated the difficulty in all its full force; for nothing is gained by winking out of sight the tremendous obstacles, with which liberal principles and institutions must contend. We have not time at present to answer the great question now proposed. We will only say, that we do not despair; and we will briefly suggest what seems to us the chief expedient, by which the cause of freedom, obstructed as it is, must now be advanced. In despotic countries, those men, whom God hath inspired with lofty sentiments and a thirst for freedom, (and such are spread through all Europe,) must, in their individual capacity, communicate themselves to individual minds. The cause of liberty on the continent cannot now be forwarded by the action of men in masses. But in every country there are those who feel their degradation and their wrongs, who abhor tyranny as the chief obstruction of the progress of nations, and who are willing and prepared to suffer for liberty. Let such men spread around them their own spirit by every channel, which a jealous despotism has not closed. Let them give utterance to sentiments of magnanimity in private conference, and still more by the press; for there are modes of clothing and expressing kindling truths, which, it is presumed, no censorship would dare to proscribe. Let them especially teach that great truth, which is the seminal prin-

ciple of a virtuous freedom, and the very foundation of morals and religion ; we mean, the doctrine, that conscience, the voice of God in every heart, is to be listened to above all other guides and lords ; that there is a sovereign within us, clothed with more awful powers and rights than any outward king ; and that he alone is worthy the name of a man, who gives himself up solemnly, deliberately, to obey this internal guide through peril and in death. This is the spirit of freedom ; for no man is wholly and immutably free but he who has broken every outward yoke, that he may obey his own deliberate conscience. This is the lesson to be taught alike in republics and despotisms. As yet it has but dawned on the world. Its full application remains to be developed. They who have been baptized, by a true experience, into this vital and all-comprehending truth, must every where be its propagators ; and he who makes one convert to it near a despot's throne, has broken one link of that despot's chain. It is chiefly in the diffusion of this loftiness of moral sentiment, that we place our hope of freedom ; and we have a hope, because we know that there are those who have drunk into this truth, and are ready, when God calls, to be its martyrs. We do not despair, for there is a contagion, we would rather say a divine power, in sublime moral principle. This is our chief trust. We have less and less hope from force and bloodshed, as the instruments of working out man's redemption from slavery. History shows us not a few princes, who have gained or strengthened thrones by assassination or war. But freedom, which is another name for justice, honor, and benevolence, scorns to use the private dagger, and wields with trembling the public sword. The true conspiracy before which tyranny is to fall, is that of virtuous, elevated minds, which shall consecrate themselves to the work of awakening in men a consciousness of the rights, powers, purposes, and greatness of human nature ; which shall oppose to force the heroism of intellect and conscience, and the spirit of selfsacrifice. We believe that, at this moment, there are virtue and wisdom enough to shake despotic thrones, were they as confiding, as they should be, in God and in their own might, and were they to pour themselves through every channel into the public mind.

We close our present labors, with commending to the protection of Almighty God the cause of human freedom and improve-

ment. We adore the wisdom and goodness of his providence, which has ordained, that liberty shall be wrought out by the magnanimity, courage, and sacrifices of men. We bless him for the glorious efforts which this cause has already called forth ; for the intrepid defenders who have gathered round it, and whose fame is a most precious legacy of past ages ; for the toils and sufferings by which it has been upheld ; for the awakening and thrilling voice which comes to us from the dungeon and scaffold, where the martyrs of liberty have pined or bled. We bless him, that even tyranny has been overruled for good by exciting a resistance, which has revealed to us the strength of virtuous principle in the human soul. We beseech this Great and Good Parent, from whom all pure influences proceed, to enkindle, by his quickening breath, an unquenchable love of virtue and freedom in those favored men, whom he hath enriched and signalized by eminent gifts and powers, that they may fulfil the high function of inspiring their fellow beings with a consciousness of the birthright and destination of human nature. Wearied with violence and blood, we beseech him to subvert oppressive governments, by the gentle yet awful power of truth and virtue ; by the teachings of uncorrupted Christianity ; by the sovereignty of enlightened opinion ; by the triumph of sentiments of magnanimity ; by mild, rational, and purifying influences, which will raise the spirit of the enslaved, and which sovereigns will be unable to withstand. For this peaceful revolution we earnestly pray. If, however, after long forbearing, and unavailing applications to justice and humanity, the friends of freedom should be summoned, by the voice of God within, and by his providence abroad, to vindicate their rights with other arms, to do a sterner work, to repel despotic force by force, may they not forget, even in this hour of provocation, the spirit which their high calling demands. Let them take the sword with awe, as those on whom a holy function is devolved. Let them regard themselves as ministers and delegates of Him, whose dearest attribute is mercy. Let them not stain their sacred cause by one cruel deed, by the infliction of one needless pang, by shedding without cause one drop of human blood.

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